

# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 1



“IT HAS THIS CHARACTER THAT  
CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE NO  
LONGER HAS.”

**L:** ‘Our goal was to find a space that suited A's design and bridal work. We saw that all big bridal ateliers in France were located in such historical buildings of significant architecture, and we now feel that it is an ideal way and space to continue with the atelier work.’

**L:** ‘Spaces like this have always been used for commercial purposes and they still have this commercial and entrepreneurial aura with them. The area has been characterized for decades as a distinct fabric retail and wholesale area in Thessaloniki. Architecturally, the building has these wonderful open areas, it's very bright, with high ceilings, and it has this kind of noble, graceful and elegant character that

contemporary Greek architecture no longer has.’

**L:** ‘In the 1950s people had been through so much hardship after the war. Architecture, history and heritage were not their priority. They would see a building like this and imagine a 12-story block of flats in its place instead, a space where they could do business and make money, without paying attention to the historical side of the building.’

**L:** ‘We haven't touched anything from the initial architecture, it's only restoration work that we have done and removal of added layers on the original design elements. This has been our intention from the outset.’



HISTORICAL



PRE-RESTORATION



DURING RESTORATION



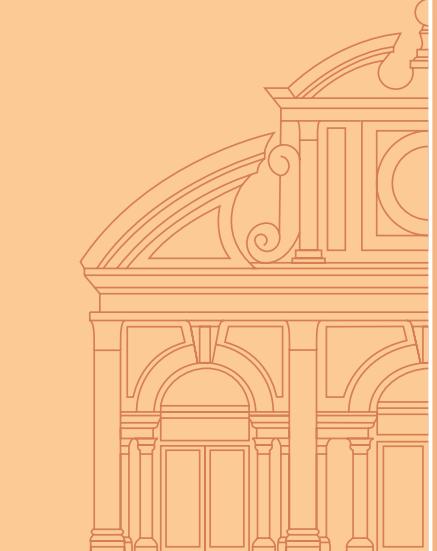
CURRENT



CURRENT



EXTERIOR



“IT PREDISPOSES YOU FOR SOMETHING  
CREATIVE AND POSITIVE.”

**Q:** What does working here mean to you?

**A:** ‘It is much more pleasant, the space and its aura are great.’

**L:** ‘It encourages you to pay closer attention to detail in your work, to make things that last through time, by seeing how much (the previous owners) had invested in the detail and the materials used. And this was paid back after all, because it's a building that still stands in a very good condition after 110 years, it's just beautiful. It predisposes you for something creative and positive.’

**A:** ‘All my clients are very pleased with the space, they feel comfortable, it feels much better than previous spaces they have visited. Even my own creations look better in here, the fabrics were not visible in the previous space. The space is now more imposing.’

**L:** ‘That we co-exist in the same space with older entrepreneurs, like Mr. Vaskidis, inspires us to make longer-term plans, it helps to create a vision for a long-term entrepreneurship in the space.’

**L:** ‘Plus, the appointment duration is now longer, people like staying longer in the space. Clients used to stay for around 45-50 minutes, they now stay more than one hour. It's interesting to note that people interested to rent space in the Stoa are also influenced by our space. Photographers and artists have seen photos of the atelier in magazines and show interest in the Stoa. There is new interest in the building.’

**L:** ‘breathes now’, people walk and stand by to look at it.’

**L:** ‘This is typical of the area, it's always buzzing with life. From as early as 9 am until 3-4 pm, it's very busy, mainly with people over 40 years of age in the commercial business. It then relaxes, and later the younger people are here until the early hours of the morning.’

**L:** ‘When we tell a young woman how to get to the atelier, we usually say “Volakouli St., where La Doze bar and Tatoulogi (a tattoo shop) is” and she goes “Yes, I got it!” When it comes to an older woman we are allowed in the street. The building

mention the end of Ermou St., where retail shops are and, again, she goes “Yes, I got it.” People even remember the clock that stopped in 1978 on the top of the building. So different ages and different social groups use the space and can identify with it.’

**A:** ‘To start with, our friends and clients were surprised that we decided to leave the previous space in order to move here.’

**L:** ‘The previous neighborhood matched the boutique-y style of A's work. For the last 5-10 years the area had lost its character. It's only now that it gradually takes a new

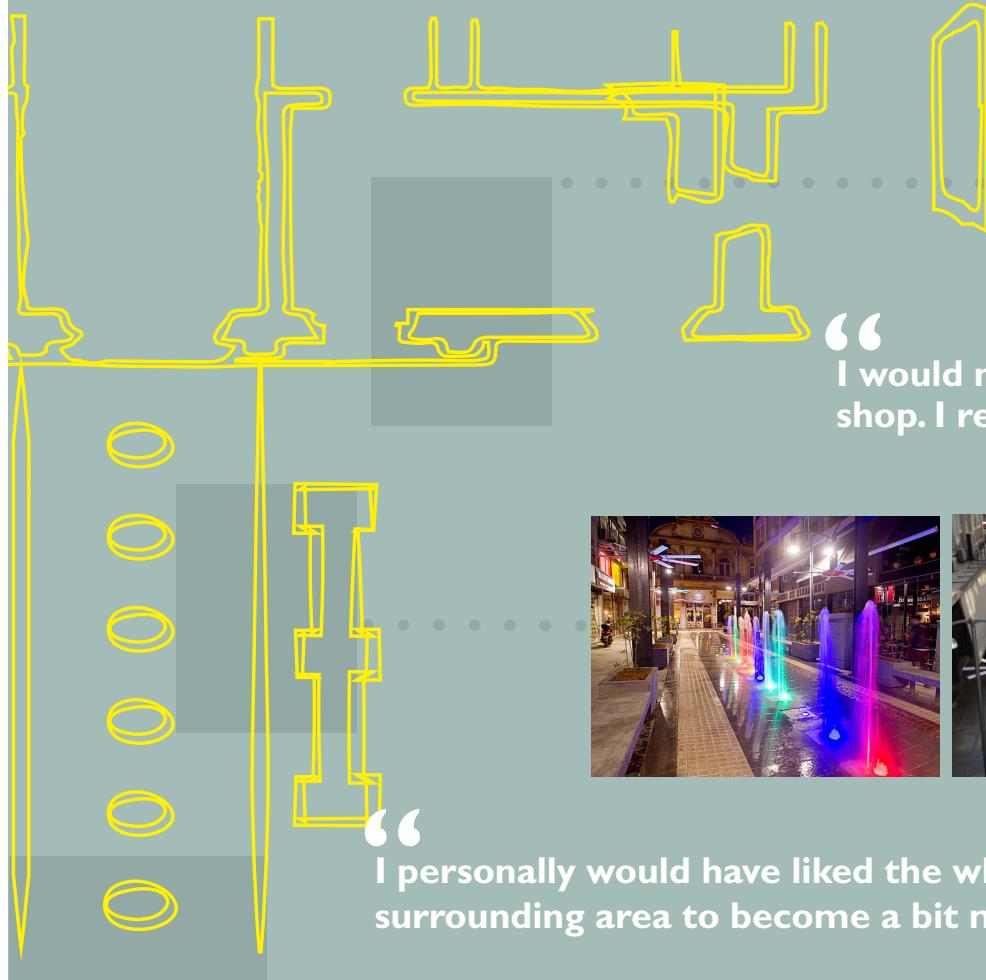
form. The creative entrepreneurs who have moved in the area have brought some kind of balance to the anarchy and entertainment ghetto that previously prevailed. It's positive that there is life 24 hours a day and that young people use the space. This has its implications of course.’

**L:** ‘We'd like to leave our own mark in the neighborhood. I wouldn't mind if years after people say “In this building designer A used to have her atelier.”

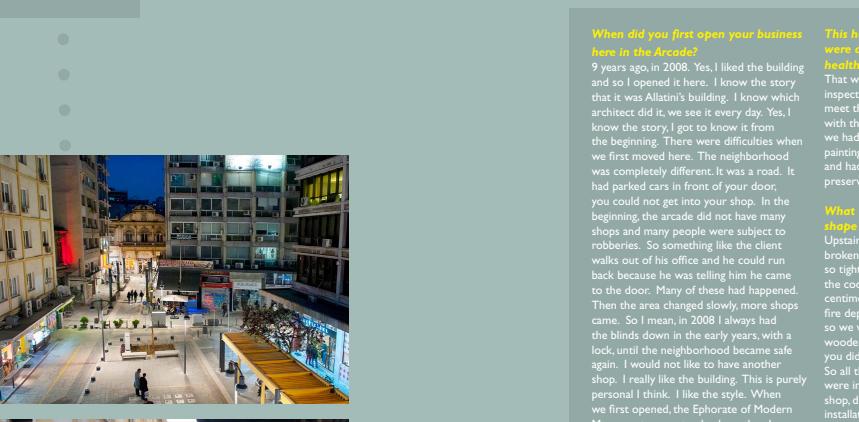
**L:** ‘Some practical issues need to be sorted and taken care of for the building to be

# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 6



“I would not like to have another shop. I really like the building.”



“I personally would have liked the whole surrounding area to become a bit more touristic.”

**When did you first open your business here in the Arcade?**

9 years ago, in 2008. Yes, I liked the building and so I opened it here. I know the story that it was Allatini's building. I know which architect did it, we see it every day. Yes, I like the story, I got to know it from the beginning. There were difficulties when we first moved here. The neighborhood was completely different, it was a road. The neighborhood had parked cars in front of your door, you could not get into your shop. In the beginning, the arcade did not have many shops and many people were subject to robberies. So something like the client walks out of his office and he could run back because he was telling him he came to the door. Many of these had happened. Then the area changed slowly, more shops came. So I mean, in 2008 I always had the blinds down in the early years, with a lock, until the neighborhood became safe again. I would not like to have another shop. I really like the building. This is purely personal I think. I like the style. When we first opened, the Ephorate of Modern Monuments came to check on the place. That meant the license would be slow, right? And it was, it took at least 6 months. This means that I was at town planning everyday, or the Ephorate of Modern Monuments, and the municipality. I did find a solution. In the end I was forced to go to the town planning department myself, because they did not find the envelope of the building, it was lost. I told him my problems and he made a phone call and after 20 minutes the envelope was found and everything was arranged.

**This has to do with the fact that there were and there are sanitary, and health concerns?**

That was easy to sort out. Because inspection control comes to see you, you meet the requirements and you do it. But with the Ephorate of Modern Monuments, we had a problem because we found painting frescoes under the plasterboard and had to deal with the process of painting it. They told us there was a banner with the story of the building, but they also removed it, is that true?

Those who put them up, remove them. The municipality had installed it, and the municipality removed it. It ought to be there after the restoration happens. It has become much better. Of course it could have been even better because now they made fountains on the road and they need to be fixed often. The city is a cement city. Also, there are planters but there is no gardener. The shops take care of them. The guys there planted these flowers and the gentleman from across the street waters them.

**What were the changes you made to shape the space?**

Upstairs there was a staircase that was there after the restoration happens. It has become much better. Of course it could have been even better because now they made fountains on the road and they need to be fixed often. The city is a cement city. Also, there are planters but there is no gardener. The shops take care of them. The guys there planted these flowers and the gentleman from across the street waters them.

**Anatoli, have you seen interest from your fellow friends, or people you deal with in the area? You are telling us that it would be nice to be revived?**

In the beginning, before the crisis there was more interest. There were many friends, painters, architectural offices, and photographers. They all left for other countries, and closed. Many young people made a new start here because the neighborhood was picking up. Now everybody's gone.

**You, your business, how do you see its growth within the next five years?**

**What would you like to do?**

Something has to change politically and economically in our country.



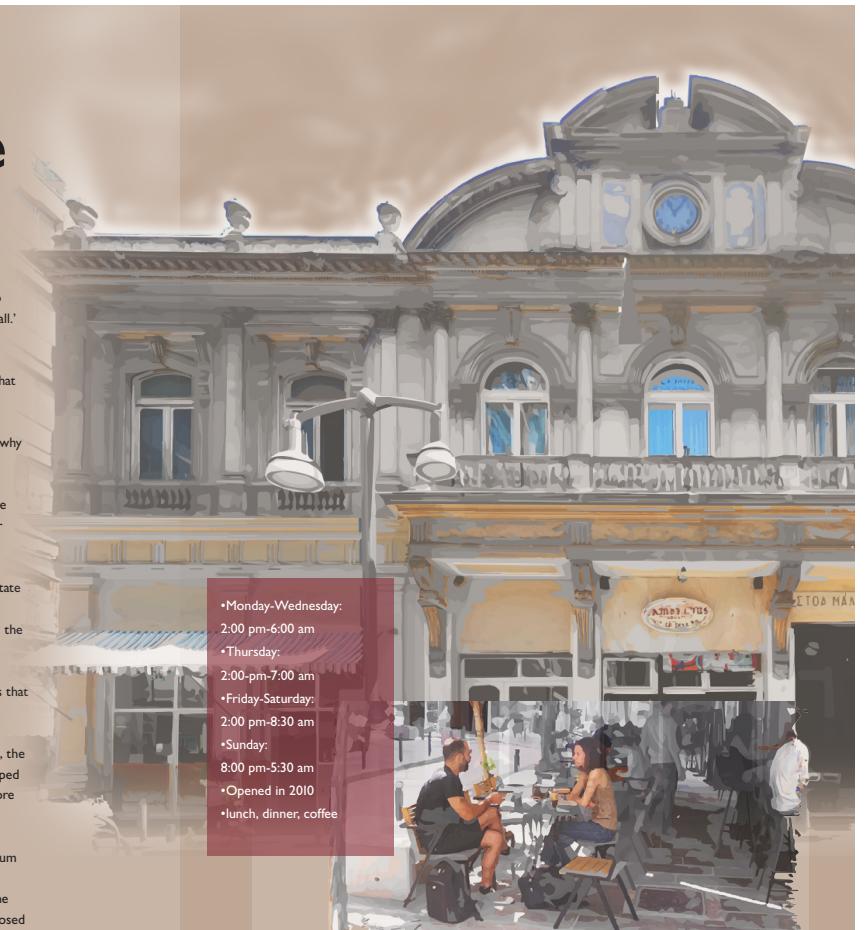


# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 3

- 'If the Ephorate of Modern Monuments is so keen to maintain the Stoa Malakopi, they may as well allow us to keep it clean – as it stands, we cannot do that, we can't clean and paint the facade, for example. We cannot intervene at all.'
- 'Previously I wouldn't care, I wouldn't notice such buildings. Once I realized how beautiful they can be if they are well made and maintained... It's a shame that the building stands as it is.'
- 'When I moved here the city night life was here, all of it.' (this is the reason why he opened his sandwich shop here)
- 'There were problems with the permission to open my shop, all caused by the Ephorate of Modern Monuments. It took nine months to get the permit. Their problem was that they would not spend time on my case, they had other cases worth of millions. Sometimes I would find them, other times I wouldn't, a huge office with hundreds of folders on the desk, a proper mess. (he describes the state of the ephorate office) They wouldn't even come here to see it. After those 9 months someone came and they announced that my permit was now issued. In the meantime I had to pay nine months rent (without having opened the shop yet)'
- 'All the cities I've been to, there are small shops in listed buildings, businesses that respect the building but they're functional.'
- 'I didn't know anything about the history of the building before I moved here, the only thing that I knew as I was wandering around was about the clock that stopped (at 11:05 pm during the 1978 earthquake). I was in denial in a way to find out more about the building, because it took a lot of effort to open my shop.'
- 'Between 2014-2016 all of this space was unmade, unpaved, then the referendum took place (with regards to austerity measures agreed between the Greek government and the EU), so people started leaving, they couldn't even access the space, because it was like walking in a field. It must be around ten shops that closed during those years with the outbreak of the crisis.'

**"I really like the building as I see it, it's beautiful and I think it could be a landmark for Thessaloniki, but with all this treatment I received, I care up to a point."**



**"Our communication with neighbor shops and businesses concerns only the sewage system... People wouldn't care insofar their business was not involved. There was no sense of collectivity."**

- 'Our communication with neighbor shops and businesses concerns only the sewage system [interviewer laughs]. Unfortunately this is the case... Not even when Boutaris (Thessaloniki's mayor) was out of his mind, coming here day after day trying to close all the bars and clubs – he would bring police cars and municipality vans to remove chairs in the middle of the night. The neighborhood had to die down. – In such cases I didn't see much communication. People wouldn't care insofar their business was not involved. There was no sense of collectivity.'
- 'There are things to be done, it's many of us who want to see change happening. We could even hold festivals here.'
- 'I'm rather numb at this moment, thinking ahead about the future, I'm trying to hang on in there. I'm just hoping. It's going to be the third year for me bearing such financial burden, it wears me out. I'm even thinking about moving abroad if I can't go on longer.'



# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 4

1867

Original house is built by the Allatini Family, featuring a mansion with a garden.

1906

The Malakopi Arcade is built as the Bank of Thessaloniki by Italian architect, Vitaliano Poselli, in the garden space of the Allatini House.

1912

The first Balkan War occurs, Thessaloniki is liberated by Greece. Later Thessaloniki becomes the state capital.

1917

The Great Thessaloniki Fire of 1917 happens, destroying two-thirds of the city. The Malakopi Arcade was safe from the fire, however the city faced severe damages that ushered new urban planning.

1939-1942

World War II, Nazi occupation in Greece.

...it was like a small neighborhood

Banque de Salonique reopens as the Bank of Chios

1978

June 20: the Great Earthquake of Thessaloniki happens, registering at a 6.2 magnitude. The clock of the Malakopi Arcade stops at 11:05.

1990's

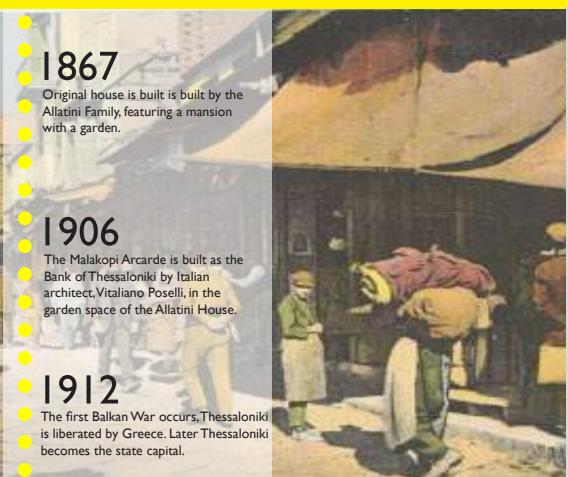
Stockbrokers that once inhabited the arcade have left.

2000's

Mid 2000's: More bars, clubs, and pubs open up; the area gains a new nightlife.

2016: Revitalizations begin happening to the arcade.

"With the reconstruction, people started coming again in order to see a cooler place."



**"What we would definitely want is for the State to treat us completely differently."**

Is it 5 to 6 years that this has stopped?

That it has stopped? Eh, 3-4.

**What problems did this cause to you? That the area has been transformed this way?**

First of all noise. During the daytime... there was a period that there weren't any people here in the morning. It was much quieter. **With the reconstruction, people started coming again in order to see a cooler place.** Of course, now the reconstruction is complete, we have a heat wave, and the fountains are not working. From 2000 onwards, they keep coming and going, coming and going. Many architects had come, who, due to the crisis, packed their stuff and went home.

**What are your main priorities?**

Priorities or wish? Because as a wish, **I would love it if the area also had commercial stores.** I mean, to not just have nightlife. I would prefer to have stores at the back side, where I did not give the spaces. It has to do with everything becoming similar and they all played their own music loudly. It is different to have a bar here, and another one there, and for the remaining part to be void, and it is different to have them one next to the other, changing the sound. In the end, people get bored. They do not understand anything; it is like Babylon. Some of the initial tenants were brokers, meaning that there was a time, I do not know exactly when, that transactions were made in gold. Then this was banned. And there were many brokers who took gold and performed such business. I don't know if there was ever a Stock Market during the Turkish Occupation in the area, and if this named the Stock Market Arcade.

**Isn't the square also called Stock Market Square?**  
Yes. During my era there were brokers. There were some broker representatives, because the only Stock Market was in Athens. We had two brokers, stockbrokers, until '90. One was in the arcade in a small space. And opposite the street there were many. Yes, I think it must have been until '90.

**"I would love it if the area also had commercial stores. I mean, to not just have nightlife."**



**"We are trying to have the spaces rented as much as possible, to have proper tenants who build things, instead of breaking them."**